great divide

CONTINENTAL DIVIDES… IN MINNESOTA

Look over Minnesota's landscape, and you'll see the story of a great sheet of ice which moved and shifted across the land, pushing and scaping the earth, leaving behind ridges and plains. As these glaciers melted, the water filled low areas forming some of the 22,000 Minnesota lakes. Rivers flowed around the ridges, draining into three great river systems that move Minnesota-born water to three distant seas. Those glacial ridges form Minnesota's Continental Divide.

WHERE THE WATER GOES

North and west of the watershed markers on Highways 10/39, and Highways 46 and 38, lakes and streams flow northward through the Red and Rainy Rivers to Hudson Bay and the Arctic. Many towns within the Chippewa National Forest are in this **Hudson Bay Watershed**.

Waters which flow to the North Atlantic through the Great Lakes begin at the crest of the "Giants Range", a major highland feature of northeastern Minnesota. A rare three-way continental divide is located by a marker just north of Hibbing. A drop of water falling on this point may travel to each of the three major watersheds. The northeast corner of Minnesota is part of the **North Atlantic Watershed**.

All areas of the Chippewa National Forest south and west of the Hudson Bay and North Atlantic watersheds flow through the Mississippi to the Gulf of Mexico. Itasca State Park, located southwest of the Forest, is the headwaters of this great river. Walker and communities in the southern part of the Forest lie within the **Mississippi River Watershed.**

WATERSHED MANAGEMENT

Knowledge of watersheds is essential for developing management objectives for both flowing and standing waters on the Chippewa National Forest. Lakes and wetlands are frequently viewed as isolated bodies of water, but they receive water supplies from surrounding forests and connect to river systems. Land use practices within a watershed greatly affect these aquatic systems.

TO PROTECT THE WATER

Practice land stewardship. As a land owner, living within a watershed is similar to living next to a lake or river. Contact your local natural resource agency for information on how you can protect water quality!